of India and State Governments for examination and decision on their implementation.

Haj pilgrimage

996. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indians that went for Haj this year;

(b) out of them how many made the pilgrimage through the Haj Committee; and

(c) how many people went to Makkah through private tour operators?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) 1,16,078 Indians went for Haj this year.

(b) 69,795 pilgrims went for Haj through the Haj Committee.

(c) 46,283 pilgrims visited Makkah through Private Tour Operators including Indian nationals resident in third countries.

Committee for foolproof passport system

997. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the terrorists are misusing passports after procuring them under false names;

(b) whether it is also a fact that a committee to suggest ways to streamline and making the passport a foolproof system was recently appointed;

(c) if so, what are its recommendations; and

(d) by when these are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes. There have been a few cases of terrorists fraudulently obtaining passports under false names.

(b) A Committee was set up in 1987 to look into the question of passport forgeries and advise on ways and means to eliminate forgery of

passports. An Inter-Ministerial Technical Sub-committee, which was constituted in 1988 under this Committee, meets regularly to study the trends in passport forgeries and to introduce new security features in Indian Passports, Travel Documents and Visa stickers.

(c) The Committee recommended implementation of More Secured Passport (MSP), Machine Readable Passport (MRP) and Machine Readable Visa (MRV). India also attends meetings of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) on standardisation of security features for incorporation in travel documents and visas in all member countries.

(d) Most of these recommendations have been implemented or are in various stages of implementation.

Over staying by Indians in Israel

998. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether cases of illegal over staying by Indians have been reported from Israel last year;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken against the organisers who sent the farmers to study the irrigation system in Israel?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes.

(b) A total of 135 Indian nationals were reported to have over stayed in Israel during the year 2002.

(c) The concerned authorities in India have been informed about the involvement of certain agents in sending Indian nationals to Israel for further action in the matter.

List of Indian insurgents living in Bangladesh

999. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have given to the Government of Bangladesh a list of 88 Indian insurgents living in the Bangladeshi soil;